

DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL VISA NEWS

April 2009, Issue 5



As always, if you or someone else in your office or organization would like to be added to or removed from our electronic distribution list, please e-mail JordanRL@state.gov. We also welcome your feedback on this newsletter, as well as topics you would like to see addressed in future issues. Please note the next issue may not be published in June, depending on when the new Chief arrives.



Sign Up for the May 22 Seminar

Anyone who has not yet pre-registered for our seminar from 10-1 on May 22, 2009, should send an e-mail to munteancl@state.gov no later than May 14 to be added to the list. Anyone not on the list will not be allowed to enter.

Upcoming Desk Hours and Closure

Friday, April 24, 2009 only, the Desk will open from 10-11 instead of 11-12.

Friday, May 22, 2009, the Desk will close due to the above seminar.

Monday, May 25, 2009, the desk will close for Memorial Day.

Friday, July 3, 2009, the desk will close for Independence Day.

Welcome Back and Farewells

Division Chief Carrie Muntean has returned from leave, but we are bidding a sad farewell to her deputy, Hattie Tapley, who is retiring on May 1, 2009. Carrie's last day as Chief is just a few weeks later, on May 29. The arrival dates for the new Deputy and Chief are yet to be confirmed, but we will keep you posted. Therefore, as of the end of May, urgent cases should be communicated via fax to 202-663-1608 or e-mail to the relevant adjudicating officer (Phyllis Zuraski at zuraskipl@state.gov or USCIS liaison Catalina Chiarella at chiarellacd@state.gov).

Our Turnaround Time and Urgent Cases

Especially in light of the above personnel changes, please remember that our standard turnaround time for visa renewal cases not requiring administrative processing is 3-5 business days. Please remind all applicants to plan ahead! Only life or death circumstances qualify for treatment as exceptions.

Important Immigration Notes

We still receive surprised e-mails or calls each time USCIS refuses a change of status applicant because he or she started employment at an embassy or international organization before USCIS approved the change of status. Please recall that anyone requiring an A or G visa to work in their position at your embassy or organization (which is just about everyone) needs to wait until USCIS approves the change of status before actually beginning their employment (you can register them with Protocol based on the job offer; Protocol finalizes them as employees, or terminates them, once USCIS makes its final decision). Alternatively, if they need to start employment sooner, they should go overseas to get the appropriate visa before working. If you have any questions about whether an applicant might be exempt from the requirement to have the appropriate A or G visa before starting employment, please e-mail chiarellacd@state.gov to check with Catalina before letting the applicant begin employment.

It is important to remember that USCIS makes the final decision in these cases, so we cannot tell you in advance whether they will be approved or not. We also cannot overturn any USCIS decisions. If you decide to appeal a final decision, please note it must be done within 30 days and should present new evidence for reconsideration.

Finally, please also note that USCIS is only here once per week, so the turnaround time in our office for these cases can be as much as a few weeks. Thank you for your patience.

United States Department of State, Diplomatic Liaison Division

2401 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20522-0106

Tel: (202) 663-1743 Fax: (202) 663-1608

http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/types/types_1280.html (previous issues can be found here)